Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 146828

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 146828

FOLLOWING RREPEAT BONN 10733 SENT ACTION SECSTATE BREMEN
INFO DUSSELD
RF FRANKFURT HAMBURG MUNICH STUTTGART BERLIN
EC BRUSSELS USUN NEW YORK JUL 5TH.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 10733

E.O. 11655: GDS
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: EPPLER RESIGNS

REF: BONN 10594

1. NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, ERHARD EPPLER(SPD),FEDERAL AID MINISTER, HAS RESIGNED. HE DID SO FOLLOWING A CABINET MEETING ON JULY 5 IN WHICH HIS PLANS FOR THE GERMAN AID PROGRAM, WHILE NOT TOTALLY REJECTEDBY APET AND SCHMIDTON WERE CHANGED ENOUGH , EPPLER SAID, TO BE UNACCEPTABLE.

2.THE IMPLICATIONS OF HIS RESIGNATION FOR GERMAN AID IN THE FUTURE ARE BEING REPORTED SEPTEL, BUT THE POLITICAL ASPECT IS ALSO OF INTEREST. EPPLER'S RESIGNATION WILL
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 STATE 146828

CAUSE FEW TEARS. HE HAS BEEN BOTH CLUMSY AND ARROGANT

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

AND OWED HIS PORTFOLIO MORE TO HIS CAREFUL CULTIVATION
OF WILLY BRANDT THAN EITHER TO ABILITY OR TO A STRONG
POLITICAL BASE.

3. EPPLER HAS LONG BEEN IDENTIFIED WITH THE SPD'S LEFT
WING, THOUGH HE IS MORE OF AN OPPORTUNIST THAN AN

DEOLOGUE, AND HIS RESIGNATION MAY BE TAKEN BY THAT
WING AS A GAUNTLET THROWN BY SCHMIDT AND LEAD TO AN
OPEN FIGHT WITHIN THE PARTY. THAT POSSIBILITY, HOWEVER,
IS QUITE REMOTEDM

4. THE SPD'S LEFT WING HAS ALWAYS BEEN FAR WEAKER THAN
ONE WOULD HAVE SUPERFICIALLY JUDGED BY THE NOISE BRANDT
PERMITTED IT TO MAKE, AND SCHMIDT HAS AGAIN AND AGAIN
MADE IT CRYSTAL CLEAR THAT, AS CHANCELLOR, HE WILL NOT
TOLERATE ANY NONSENSE FROM IT. INDEED HIS DISLIKE OF
THE PARTY'S DOCTRINAIRE LEFT PLUS HIS QUITE OPEN DISDAIN
FOR EPPLER MADE EPPLER'S DEPARTURE FROM THE CABINET
MERELY A MATTER OF TIME. BUT AS THE AID PROGRAM ITSELF
IS THE OSTENSIBLE ISSUE, THE RESIGNATION IS NOT
OBVIOUSLY EITHER PERSONAL OR POLITICAL, WHICH IS STILL
ANOTHER REASON A SERIOUS INTRA-SPD FIGHT IS UNLIKELY.

5. EPPLER'S SUCCESSOR WILL BE HANS-JUERGEN WISCHNEWSKI,
WHO HAD THE JOB ONCE BEFORE, 1966-68. HE CAN BE
COUNTED ON TO BE NEITHER INVENTIVE NOR ARGUMENTATIVE
NOR IN ANY WAY TROUBLESOME FOR SCHMIDT AS THE
CHANCELLOR SQUEEZES THE BUDGET IN AN ATTEMPT TO CONTROL
INFLATION.
HILLENBRAND UNQUOTE
UNQUOTE SISCO

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Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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